

**STATE-PRIVATE SECTOR-CIVIL-SOCIETY PARTNERSHIPS
AND THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR
AFRICA (ECA) : A SOUTH AFRICAN RESPONSE**

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:

Date:

ABSTRACT

As the regional arm of the United Nations in Africa, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is faced with the challenge of conforming to the broader agenda of its mother body while it simultaneously strives to be seen to devise solutions that are unique to Africa's development needs. This means that the ECA needs to find a way of striking a balance between the demands of international development trends and the viability of such trends for Africa.

The United Nations, similarly to other influential multilateral institutions like the World Bank, has moved into the 21st century with the 'partnerships approach' to development. The central idea behind these partnerships is that of promoting active participation between the state, the private sector and civil society in contributing towards development. What this means, therefore, is that development is no longer viewed as the sole responsibility of the state, but rather calls for a closer working relationship between these three sectors. Given the fact that these sectors are at different levels of development in many African countries, with some countries not even having an active civil society, private sector or even a strong state, the ECA has to make sense of what exactly partnerships mean for Africa.

This study is based on an understanding that if the ECA wishes to have an impact on the African continent, it will have to engage its Member States in order to develop a common idea and approach to the conceptualisation and implementation of partnerships in Africa. In light of this background, this study focuses on South Africa as a Member State of the ECA and one of a few countries that have a strong civil society and developed private sector. What is also significant about South Africa is the fact that a number of significant initiatives that involve both state and non-state actors have been evident in the period since the first democratic elections of 1994, thus allowing for an informed response from representatives of the different sectors. A South African response has thus been compiled

from the six interviews that were conducted, two with representatives from each of the three sectors.

Following from the responses, the study makes recommendations as to how the ECA can play a leading role in promoting partnerships in Africa.

OPSOMMING

Die Verenigde Nasies se Ekonomiese Kommissie vir Afrika (EKA), 'n streeksvertakking van die Verenigde Nasies in Afrika, staan gedurigdeur voor die uitdaging om te konformeer met die breër agenda van die moederorganisasie, maar streef terselfdertyd daarna om spesifieke antwoorde te vind vir Afrika se unieke ontwikkelingsbehoefte. Dit beteken dat die EKA 'n middeweg tussen die eise van internasionale ontwikkelingstendense en die toepaslikheid daarvan in Afrika moet vind.

Net soos die Wêreldbank en ander invloedryke internasionale instansies, is die Verenigde Nasies se benadering tot ontwikkeling in die een en twintigste eeu geskoei op 'n vennootskapsbasis. Die onderliggende oogmerk van dié benadering is die aanmoediging van aktiewe bydraes tot ontwikkeling deur die staat, privaatsektor en burgerlike samelewing. Derhalwe beteken dit dat ontwikkeling nie meer gesien word as die uitsluitlike verantwoordelikheid van die staat nie, maar eerder as 'n funksie van samewerking tussen die drie bogenoemde sektore. Aangesien baie Afrika state hulself op verskillende vlakke van ontwikkeling bevind, tesame met die feit dat sommige nie oor 'n aktiewe burgerlike samelewing, private sektor, of selfs 'n sterk staat beskik nie, is dit die taak van die EKA om gestalte te gee aan die konsep van 'vennootskappe' binne 'n Afrika konteks.

Hierdie studie gaan uit vanaf die standpunt dat die EKA alleenlik 'n impak sal hê as lidstate betrek word om 'n gemeenskaplike verstandhouding en benadering tot die konsepsualisering en implimentering van vennootskappe in Afrika te ontwikkel. In die lig van bogenoemde, fokus die studie op Suid-Afrika, as EKA lidstaat en een van 'n paar Afrika state met 'n sterk burgerlike samelewing en goed ontwikkelde privaatsektor. 'n Verdere belangrike dimensie in die geval van Suid-Afrika, is die aantal belangrike inisiatiewe wat gesamentlik tussen staats- en nie-staatsinstansies sedert 1994 aangepak is. Hierdie inisiatiewe het verseker dat verteenwoordigers van alle sektore 'n ingeligte benadering tot besluite rakende die ontwikkeling van die streek kon volg. Vir die doeleindes van hierdie projek is ses onderhoude gevoer – twee per sektor – ten einde 'n beter begrip te kry van die land se benadering tot vennootskappe in diens van ontwikkeling.

As 'n uitvloeisel van hierdie studie, word 'n aantal aanbevelings gemaak oor hoe die EKA 'n leidende rol kan speel in die aanmoediging van vennootskappe in Afrika.

For Amantimande nabo Sgegede

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Statement

As the twentieth century drew to a close, the idea of engaging civil society and the private sector in development, thereby moving away from concentrating on development as the role of the state only, gained momentum. One of the multilateral institutions that has embraced this development paradigm and has become a strong proponent thereof is the United Nations. The current reforms of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) have proven to be in line with the proposed economic reforms of its parent body, the United Nations. These changes are part of the ongoing debate which has been sparked off by the current Secretary-General of the United Nations' (Kofi Annan) intentions to intensify the involvement of civil society and the private sector in the activities of the United Nations and its agencies. While this involvement of non-state actors is not completely new in the United Nations, the current increase in emphasis and intensification of the UN's programme to bring non-state actors on board for development in the twenty-first century (both within the United Nations and within individual Member States of the United Nations) has invigorated debated around this issue .

In his foreword to the document entitled *The ECA and Africa: Accelerating a Continent's Development*, the General -Secretary of the ECA, Dr K.Y. Amoako, clearly states that "...ECA's new approach is underpinned by the credo that effective, high-impact developmental work in Africa can only be achieved through concrete and sustained partnerships. With this in mind, we are keen to work with partners within the UN system as well as beyond it-in the private sector and civil society and with bilateral and multilateral donors-to advance Africa's development objectives" (ECA, 1999:viii).

It is thus clear that the ECA hopes to strengthen its relationship with the private sector and civil society. If the ECA hopes to successfully engage its member states, the private sector and civil society on the prospects of partnerships or in its programme, while living up to the aspiration of 'Serving Africa Better', as is the name of its new programme orientation, then it will need to make its proposals and conceptualisation of partnerships clear to the sectors involved. Not only should the intentions be made clear, but the sectors should also be given the stage to contribute with regard to how they believe these partnerships can be implemented at a practical level. As the regional economic arm of the United Nations in Africa, the ECA needs to pay attention to the perceptions and inputs of these sectors within its Member States. In other words, the ECA needs to make sure that while it embraces partnerships for development, it is also in touch with what these sectors think of partnerships within its Member States.

It is at this point that this research finds its relevance. There are two reasons why a South African response has been sought-after in this research. To begin with, South Africa is one of the Member States of the ECA and a focus on the South African response will contribute towards understanding the perceptions of those role-players whom the ECA wishes to engage. Secondly, the South African economy has continued to be one of the strongest economies on the continent. To date, South Africa's economy accounts for more than a quarter of the overall economic output of the Sub-Saharan region (ECA,2000:4), thus making South Africa's contributions to the ECA (whether they be financial or ideological) important. Finally, South Africa has been commended as one of the African countries with a strong civil society, while a number of partnerships between the state and the private sector have become evident since the first democratic elections in 1994. This is significant in that signs of partnerships are already evident in South Africa and experiences of those role-players involved to date could be significant in shaping the way they consider partnerships to be working currently in South Africa and how they think partnerships could possibly work in Africa as a whole. Furthermore, the rapid expansion of South African businesses into African countries calls for an understanding of the approach of the South African private sector towards development in Africa.

Having identified the need to (i) understand what the ECA means by ‘partnerships’; (ii) what the response of the three sectors is to the idea of formulating partnerships for development; and finally (iii) how the ECA can promote and foster these partnerships as the way to Africa’s development, the study seeks to provide responses to these three points that have been identified by focusing on one of the Members of the ECA, namely South Africa. It can thus be deduced from these points that this research seeks to address the following research questions:

- ❖ Where does the current concept of partnerships originate?
- ❖ What implications does this hold for the way in which partnerships are perceived?
- ❖ How has the ECA translated partnerships into its own programmes?
- ❖ Is the ECA currently visible and known within South Africa and has it succeeded in communicating its intentions with regard to partnerships?
- ❖ Are some of the key role-players in the state, private sector and civil society of South Africa aware of the ‘partnership approach’ to development?
- ❖ If so, what is their understanding of partnerships and how do they hope to see them implemented in practice?
- ❖ What lessons can be drawn from the respondents to assist the ECA in its future approach to partnerships?

1.2 Units of Analysis

The first unit of analysis is the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa itself, in particular the approach of the ECA to partnerships. The ECA is analysed as a multilateral institution. The second unit of analysis is the South Africa which is analysed as an individual member of the multilateral institution under study. This comes in the form of interviews with two representatives from each of the three sectors in South Africa, namely the South African state, civil society and private sector.

1.3 Nature of the study

The nature of the study is exploratory. As Babbie (1998: 90). notes, exploratory research is typical when the research in question is examining a new interest or when the subject of study is relatively new. As indicated earlier, the involvement of non-state actors in the activities of the United Nations is not entirely new. However, the involvement of non-state actors in the programmes of the ECA as is currently being proposed by Amoako is a relatively new phenomenon, and as yet the practical implementation of such partnerships still requires clarity.

1.4 Data Collection Methods

In dealing with the first subject of the study, namely the ECA, publications and internal documentation pertaining to the ECA from the South African Department of Foreign Affairs have been made use of. The Internet website of the ECA has also been used extensively.

With regard to the collection of responses from the South African representatives of the state, civil society and private sector, interviews were held with two senior national representatives from each of the three sectors. Questions were sent in advance to the respondents in order to ensure sufficient time for preparation on the part of the respondents. The questions were posed to the respondents were meant to serve three main purposes. The first is that of establishing whether or not the respondents are aware of the work of the ECA and its envisaged approach towards development through partnerships in Africa. Secondly, whether or not the respondents consider partnerships to be the right way forward for development, particularly in Africa. Thirdly, the interviews have solicited suggestions from the respondents as to how they suggest these partnerships can be implemented, that is a practical approach to partnership. Based on these three broad objectives, a conclusion has been drawn from a number of lessons that can be drawn from the responses.

1.4.1 Selection criteria for interviews

In selecting the respondents, the first criteria was to select individuals representing well-known institution within South Africa. In addition to this, where possible, the most senior representative from that institution was sought after. Where the most senior representative unable to assist in the interview, the next relevant individual was requested. These were the respondents and the institutions that they represent:

Dr Garth le Pere and the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD- The Institute for Global Dialogue has been selected due to its ongoing research and publication on topics that deal with the challenges of globalisation. As an academic institution, the IGD was selected as the academic voice of civil society. As its Executive Director, Dr le Pere is therefore able to contribute from an International Relations academic perspective.

Mr Philip Dexter and the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC):- As a well-known national example of state, private sector and labour co-operation, NEDLAC is certainly one of South Africa's best-known examples of dialogue between the three sectors. As the Executive Director of NEDLAC, Mr Dexter has the experience of being involved at a practical level in issues of co-operation between the three sectors.

Mr Clem Sunter and Anglo American- Anglo American is one of the most successful and oldest South African multinational companies. In addition to this success, it was selected due to the fact that it also has a number of operations within the African continent. As the chairman of the Anglo American Chairman's Fund, Mr Sunter is engaged in numerous projects that fall within the realm of 'private sector social responsibility'. For this reason, he is seen to be equipped to answer questions on how the private sector can play an active role in partnerships.

Mr *James Lennox* and the *South African Chamber of Business (SACOB)*- SACOB represents a large portion of South African business (mainly English-speaking). It is active in making contribution towards legislation and policy debates. SACOB has a special unit that focuses on policy issues that relate to the development of infrastructure. Since infrastructure is one of the weaknesses of many African countries, James Lennox is seen as the relevant individual to deal with questions of the private sector's contribution to the development of infrastructure.

Dr *Rob Davies* and the *Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry*- Like the development of any country, African countries need to focus on trade and industry as one of the areas that need development. Since Dr Davies represents the parliamentary body that has to handle a number of complex economic issues and represents the ruling party in parliament, he has been selected to provide the state perspective on the topic of partnerships.

Mr *John Barton-Bridges* and the *Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)*- The Development Bank of Southern Africa, as a body that functions under the state, exists primarily for the purpose of facilitating development. As a state agency, it can thus be expected that the development trends which it follows are also indicative of the government's approach to development. Since Mr Barton-Bridges is in charge of the Private Sector Investment Business Unit, he was considered to be equipped to give input on the possible non-state actors in their partnerships with the state.

1.5 Arrangement of Chapters

Chapter One

This chapter details the objectives and motivation for the study as well as the approach of the study.

Chapter Two

This chapter focuses on the ECA. First, a background of the ECA is detailed through an explanation of the origins and broader objectives of the ECA. Included in this, is the current programme orientation, with a focus on the current thinking around partnerships within the ECA, through an analysis of statements and speeches from the ECA and programmes that have been initiated by the ECA to promote partnerships.

Chapter Three

This chapter both introduces and explains the origins of the concept of partnerships between the state, civil society and the private sector. The chapter introduces the concept within the context of the United Nations. In addition to this explanation, it also deals with the current analyses and critiques of partnerships.

Chapter Four

This chapter forms the core of the research. The interviews that have been conducted with the representatives of the South African state, civil society and private sector are reported in this chapter. While the reporting of the interviews is not in the form of direct quotes, the views presented in the chapter seek to purely capture the replies of the respondents. It is in the conclusion of this chapter that the research ties together the inputs of all the respondents, as understood by the researcher.

Chapter Five

This will be the final chapter. It must be remembered that the purpose of the research is that of exploring the current opinion of representatives of the South African state, civil society and private sector with regard to partnerships and then assessing how it relates to the current approach of the ECA to partnerships. This chapter will thus serve as a platform for recommendations on some approaches that the ECA could take in pursuit of partnerships for development. Chapter five seeks to address the research questions that have been identified.

1.6 Limitations

This study has been conducted against a background of a number of limitations. These can be divided into both practical and theoretical research limitations. The first practical limitation is that while it would have been ideal for the researcher to personally visit the ECA and conduct extensive interviews and research in the library of the ECA, limited financial resources have made it impossible to do so. Consequently, not much of the material at hand has much detail on historical activities of the ECA, which could have added to a better understanding of the ECA, particularly its ideological evolution. The second limitation is that interviews were conducted telephonically, thus limiting the possibility for direct communication and extensive engagement in the debates.

A further limitation was that upon being approached, the respondents did not feel well-equipped to contribute to the research as many of them were hearing of the ECA for the first time.

Theoretically, the study finds its limitation in the fact that since the concept of partnerships is relatively new, much of the literature that addresses this issue is not so much theoretical as it is focused on possible approaches to the theory.

Nevertheless, having identified the limitations to the study, steps were taken to circumvent the limitations. To begin with, it must be borne in mind that while an understanding of the history and ideological evolution of the ECA are important, the research still mainly concerns itself with the current activities of the ECA and for this reason the website of the ECA was extensively consulted so as to find the most current information. The speeches and policy statements that were accessed through the website of the ECA proved to be very useful since they clearly gave an idea of where the ECA is headed and what the current thinking with the ECA is.

As mentioned earlier, the researcher would have preferred to have had personal interviews with the respondents so as to solicit more detailed responses. In order to deal with this limitation, questions were sent before the interviews, thus allowing for less time to be spent on clarification than on probing the respondents further upon answering. Furthermore, the problem of the respondents' reluctance was overcome by introducing the idea of partnerships at a broad level, thereafter narrowing it down to the work of the ECA and a general opinion on approaches in Africa. While this may have limited the discussion in that the interviews were not purely based on an analysis of the ECA, it nevertheless gave the necessary starting point for suggestions on an Africa-wide approach.

While there is no clear theory on global governance, the different writings on approaches to global governance and global governance theory have assisted in highlighting the different possible theoretical debates that could arise from such approaches.

CHAPTER 2

THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (ECA)

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to establish an understanding of the role of the ECA in Africa, particularly the current position of the state, private sector and civil society partnerships within the ECA. In order to effectively do so, background will be given with regard to the history, aims, structure (including the reform of the structure), membership and finance of the ECA. Thereafter, the relationship between the ECA and South Africa will be examined. The 1996 Programme Orientation of the ECA and its relevance to the study will be discussed. Finally, this chapter will examine the progress that has been made to date with regard to partnerships, by first identifying who the ECA considers to be its partners and stating current examples of the partnership-based programmes that are currently being implemented within the ECA.

2.1. The history of the ECA

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa was established in 1958. It is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), with the other four being the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The ECA is therefore the regional arm of the United Nations in Africa (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2000 (a):1).

2.2 The aims of the ECA.

The original mandate of the ECA sets out three main aims for the Commission, namely (i) to initiate, participate in and facilitate the economic development of Africa in order to raise the level of economic activity and standards of living; (ii) to maintain and strengthen the economic relations between African countries and between Africa and the rest of the world and (iii) to undertake or finance investigations into economic and technical problems of the continent (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2000 (a):2). As part of its attempts to fulfil these three areas of its mandate, the ECA is currently focusing in the following areas: (i) supporting effective poverty-reduction policies; (ii) expanding trade and investment opportunities; (iii) raising gender awareness; (iv) addressing population, environmental and agricultural linkages; (v) harnessing information for development; (vi) promoting regional co-operation and integration; (vii) promoting the capable state; (viii) promoting partnerships for Africa's development. The ECA is also parent to the Abuja Treaty which calls for the harmonisation and rationalisation of regional groupings and an Africa Economic Community (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2000 (a):3).

2.3 Notable Activities and Achievements

During its 40 year history, the ECA credits itself with a number of contributions to development in Africa. These include the instrumental role that it played in setting up the African Development Bank (ADB); facilitating the establishment of a number of sub-regional organisation like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (now known as the Community of Eastern and Southern Africa or COMESA). Furthermore, the Commission has been active in the building of 30 technical institutions aimed at socio-economic development in Africa in the fields of technology, banking and finance, minerals and remote sensing, and planning and management. The most notable of these institutions are the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) and the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP). Further contributions by the

Commission include playing a key role in the articulation of some well-known economic plans of action for Africa such as the Lagos Plan of Action and the Cairo Agenda for Re-launching Africa's Development (ECA,1999:1).

2.4 Membership of the ECA

The ECA comprises 53 member States. These are: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea- Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Department of Foreign Affairs,2000 (a):4). Any UN members of the United Nations on the African continent or the African Islands may become members. France and the United Kingdom are Associate Members while Switzerland participates in a consultative capacity (Department of Foreign Affairs,2000 (b):2). In addition to the participation of these member States, United Nations Agencies, regional organisations and multilateral bodies and diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa are also invited as observers to most of the ECA meetings.

2.5 Financing of the ECA

As a sub-organ of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, the ECA is financed from the United Nations' resources (Department of Foreign Affairs,2000:4). The funding received from the UN amounts to approximately \$90 million (Department of Foreign Affairs,1999:5). In addition to this funding, the Member States contribute biennially on a voluntary basis to the UN Trust Fund for African Development (UNTFAD) (Department of Foreign Affairs,1999:5). "The UNTFAD contributes an important element for increasing the amount of extrabudgetary resources needed by the Commission for funding the operational activities pertaining to its work programme and priorities"

(ECA,1995:3). The Member States of the ECA are not the sole contributors to this Fund, further funding is solicited through Pledging Conferences in which non-African member states of the United Nations and other development partners of the ECA may pledge contributions to the ECA at any time especially on the occasion of the Pledging sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations held annually in New York (ECA,1995:3).

2.6 South Africa and the ECA

South Africa is a founder member of the ECA. It was expelled in 1963 but re-admitted in 1995 (Department of Foreign Affairs,2000(c): 6). In the 1997/1998 biennium, South Africa contributed US\$50 000 to the ECA (Department of Foreign Affairs,2000(b):5). South Africa notes a number of advantages to its involvement and membership to the ECA. To begin with, South Africa sees the ECA as an instrument of the African Renaissance (Department of Foreign Affairs,2000(a): 7). This is particularly the case as the ECA is viewed as a means of creating networks that extend into the Organisation for African Unity and other African organisations, thus making ripe the opportunity for the continent to present a united front at an international level. South Africa also views its participation as a facilitation of contact with the four other regional commissions under ECOSOC. Furthermore, South Africa considers itself to gain from the research and organisation abilities of the ECA secretariat and its access to UN funding and logistical support through ECOSOC (Department of Foreign Affairs,2000(a))

All the African missions of the Department of Foreign Affairs are involved in the ECA. In addition to this, South Africa's Mission to Geneva (Economic and Social Council) and New York (United Nations) are involved. The South African Ambassador in Addis Ababa is accredited to the organisation and the High Commissioner in Lusaka liaises with the Southern Africa Sub-Regional Development Centre (Department of Foreign Affairs,2000(a): 7). The Missions in London, Paris and Bern are also indirectly involved. Even though the Department of Foreign Affairs is the lead department that deals with the ECA, it is making efforts to bring other departments on board (Department of Foreign Affairs,2000 (c):3).

According to the Department of Foreign Affairs, “every Government Department involved in the economic and social development of Africa (Trade and Industry, Finance, the Development Bank of southern Africa, etc.) has a potential interest in the ECA...” (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2000 (a):6). To date, some examples of other departments and institutions in South Africa being involved in the ECA can be seen. For example, in 1992, the ECA sent a delegation to visit the Africa Institute and more recently in October 2000, the Secretary-General Amoako visited the Institute again. In 1993, the ECA held a workshop in conjunction with the Centre for Research Development (CRD) of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). According to the Department of foreign Affairs, mutually beneficial visits are particularly taking place at the technical level in the areas of science and technology, information technology, telecommunications, agriculture, finance, food security, good governance, gender affairs, energy, mining, road safety, transport, civil aviation, environmental protection, tourism, trade and regional integration (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2000 (a):6).

While such co-operation has existed, the Department of Foreign Affairs has expressed concern over the reluctance of other departments to participate in the activities of the ECA. The Department notes that “[w]hile co-operation at the senior official and NGO levels is expanding, participation at policy level has been very disappointing and no Minister has attended the Commission’s Ministerial meetings (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2000 (a):6). It further notes that “...DFA, the lead department, has problems with the other departments as the latter have shown reluctance to partake in ECA activities. DFA also has problems with the ECA as the latter is not sending relevant reports with invitations to meetings. The reports are given at meetings which makes it impossible to make a meaningful contribution as DFA is not able to consult other departments” (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2000(c):3).

It thus seems that while South Africa is a member of the ECA and it continues to make financial contributions to the ECA, much still needs to be done to generate interest in the Commission and to bring about consensus on the relevance of the ECA to South Africa in

other line function departments, who currently “do not see the importance of the Commission to South Africa” (Department of Foreign Affairs,2000(c):4). The effectiveness of South Africa’s contributions to the structures of the ECA will depend largely on the co-ordination and will of all the relevant state departments to participate in the structures and activities of the ECA.

2.7 The Structure of the ECA

The three tiers of the ECA are the Conference of Ministers, the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole and the Secretariat. The main legislative authority of the ECA rests with the Conference of Ministers (Department of Foreign Affairs,2000(a):3). It is comprised of the ministers responsible for economic and financial affairs, planning and development from each of the member states. The discussions of this Conference focus particularly on economic and social affairs.

The role of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole is to advise the Conference of Ministers. Within this body there are Sectorial Ministerial Conferences which are advised by committee officials who specialise in a specific field. Examples of such specialist committees include a ‘Committee on Industry and Private Sector Development’, ‘Committee on Human Development and Civil Society’ and a ‘Committee on Natural Resources and Science and Technology’ (ECA,2000 (a):9).

The Secretariat is based in Addis Ababa and provides the necessary service for the meeting of the Conference of ministers and the meetings of the Commission’s subsidiary bodies. It further also carries out the resolutions and implements the programmes adopted there. In addition to the Office of the Executive Secretary, there are eight divisions that are based in the Secretariat. These are: Food, Security and Sustainable Development; Development Management; Development Information Services; Regional Co-operation and Integration; Programme Planning; Finance and Evaluation; Economic and Social

Policy; Human Resources and System Management; and finally the Conference and General Services Divisions.

In addition to the central structures of the ECA, it is further divided into four or five Sub-Regional Development Centres(SRDC's), namely the Central African-SRDC, East African- SRDC, North African- SRDC, Southern African-SRDC and the West African - SRDC (ECA,2000 (b)). In the past, these centres were known as Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOC's). What is most significant about the SRDC's is that the member States are expected to work closely with the SRDC under which they fall. It is the duty of these each SRDC to extend its services and research to each of its member States (Department of Foreign Affairs,2000(b):6).

2.7.1 The reform of the Intergovernmental Machinery of the ECA

It is significant to note that prior to assuming his position as the Secretary-General of the ECA in 1995, Amoako worked for the World Bank. It will be recalled from the preceding chapter that it was in the 1995 World Development Report of the World Bank that the idea of state-private sector-civil society partnerships gained prominence. Similarly, emphasis on partnerships as an underlying theme in the work of the ECA gained prominence in 1996 when the ECA embarked on a reform and restructuring programme. This is based on the "conviction that development assistance to Africa requires concerted effort and new forms of partnerships and collaboration among the stakeholders in the continent's development" (ECA,1999:2). Consequently, it can be argued that Mr Amoako, as the man behind the reforms, is inclined to propagate the kinds of partnerships suggested by the World Bank and recently adopted by the United Nations.

As directed by both the General Assembly of the United Nations and the Economic and Social Council, the different organs of the United Nations, including regional commissions, have to review their activities in order to enhance the effectiveness of their programme and intergovernmental machinery (ECA,2000(a):3). As indicated by the

name, the intergovernmental machinery has historically served the purpose of creating a platform for relations and interaction between member States at government level. However, in its motivation for the reform of the intergovernmental machinery that was adopted in 1996, the ECA identifies four principles that guide its revision of its structure. One of these principles is that of "...establishing or retaining subsidiary bodies to enable the Commission to draw on the advice of experts from Governments of member States but also the private sector and civil society groups in Africa" (ECA,2000(a):6). As mentioned earlier, the UN and ECOSOC expect the Commission to review not only its intergovernmental machinery but also its programme. Subsequently, the Programme Orientation of the ECA which was adopted in 1996 has also been designed to be inclusive of non-state actors.

2.8 The Programme Orientation of the ECA

The current programme orientation of the ECA was adopted in 1996 and is encapsulated under the title '*Serving Africa Better: Strategic Directions for the Economic Commission for Africa*' (ECA,2000(c)). This document which lays out the strategic direction for 1996-2001 clearly states that the ECA plans to sharpen its focus, strengthen its partnerships and increase its impact (ECA,2000(c): 2). The document identifies five categories of partners. These are African intergovernmental organisations, including the Organisation for African Unity and other regional blocks within Africa; other agencies of the United Nations system; African universities and research institutions; bilateral donors; and civil society groups (ECA,2000(c):5).

What is interesting to note about the partners that were identified back in 1999 is that back then, the private sector did not feature as an identified partner for the ECA. However, there appears to be a shift in thinking, or at least, a move towards incorporating the private sector into the partnerships of the ECA. In a speech that was delivered by the Deputy Executive Secretary of the ECA, Ms Lalla Ben Barka, on behalf of the Secretary-General Amoako in Kuala Lumpur in May 2000, she clearly states that there is a need to

“identify new partners in support of a strategically limited number of clearly defined initiatives among governments, the private sector and other segments of civil society that have emerged as priorities at the beginning of the twenty-first century” (ECA,2000(d):3)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, a strong argument for private sector and civil society partnerships with the state is made in Kofi Annan’s book which sets out the United Nations’ vision for the 21st century. Inevitably, this vision has permeated into the agencies of the United Nations and as a regional arm of the United Nations the ECA has not been immune to it and thus this ‘new development paradigm for the 21st century’ has been embraced by the ECA.

While stating its aims to strengthen partnerships, the ECA makes a strong point that it “will not surrender its vision of what is best for Africa when entering partnerships with other influential multilateral development institutions” (ECA,2000(c):5). In a continent where there is much suspicion of the intentions of non-state actors and multinational companies, it can be assumed that the ECA will make an equally strong point of not surrendering its vision of what is best for Africa when dealing with its private sector and civil society partners. Perhaps one of the challenges of the ECA, including its secretary-general with a World Bank background, will be to convince its member States that the adoption of such partnerships is not a blind perpetuation of a ‘Washington Consensus’ type of agenda but rather an inevitable direction in which development has to move in the 21st century, exercised with caution and backed by a strong African vision.

As can be expected, the focus on partnerships has also been extended to the Sub-Regional Development Centres. In the Subregional Development Centre for Southern Africa, for example, the theme of the Fifth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts was ‘Building Effective Partnership’. What was stressed at this particular gathering was the role of the various partners in development in the Subregion including individuals, informal sector business, big business, civil society (particularly nongovernmental organisations, intergovernmental organisations, the United Nations and bilateral partners

(Department of Foreign Affairs,2000(a): 9). As part of this Subregional Development Centre, South Africa can identify areas in which it wishes to engage its domestic partners with ECA. Of the issues that the ECA is currently focusing on, South Africa considers four to be of particular importance to itself, namely Agriculture, particularly the effects of drought; population and social issues, especially the role of women; industrial development and international trade (Department of Foreign Affairs,2000(b):5). Even within these areas, the ECA considers the establishment of partnerships to be an essential means to achieving development. In 1999, for example. the ECA called on the help of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), the Organisations of African Unity and the AAI and the African Development Bank to organise a conference on 'Industrial Partnerships and Investment in Africa' (Africa Recovery,1999:40), hence the purpose of this study to test how South Africa can go about actively partaking in the establishment and strengthening of partnerships by engaging its own private sector and civil society.

2.9 Current Examples of Partnerships in the ECA

Even though the concept of private sector and civil society partnerships with the state is still relatively new in the ECA, there have already been some moves towards putting these partnerships into action.

2.9.1 The African Development Forum (ADF)

The ECA has established an African Development Forum (ADF) through which it aims to establish "an African-driven development agenda that reflects consensus among major partners" (ECA,2000(e)). The ADF identifies the key stakeholders in African development as being the governments, civil society, the private sector, researchers and academics, intergovernmental organisation and donors. The first Forum, which was held in October 1999 focused on "the Challenge to Africa of Globalisation and the Information Age" (ECA,2000(e)), while the 2000 Forum has concentrated on "AIDS: the greatest

leadership challenge” (ECA,2000(e)). In each of these fora, the identified stakeholders have been convened with the end goal being that of drafting programmes of action and defining the environment that will enable African countries to implement these programmes (ECA,2000(e)).

There is a clear sense of urgency to make the ADF initiative a practical one whereby the interactions culminate into visible action. In the area of information technology, for example, the ECA has worked in conjunction with its partners to establish the Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA). The ITCA is an information and communication technology -focused exhibition and learning centre to demonstrate to African policy makers and planners the value of information and communication technology for African development (ECA,2000 (f)). In defining the partners of the ITCA, it is stated that the main partners in civil society will be academic, research and training institutions within Africa as well as outside of the region who will contribute to designing the curriculum and providing teaching materials for seminars and workshops. In the private sector, world-wide private sector companies in the area of information and communication technologies are targeted to support the Training Centre. Their main contribution will be in providing equipment, trainers, software and scholarships (ECA,2000(f)). It is thus clear that practical support of the partners is being solicited through this initiative.

Even though the 2000 Forum has yet to be held in December 2000, it can be expected that it will attempt to seek similar action in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The ECA will engage as many of the relevant partners that it has identified in the private sector and civil society “to address concrete roles and responsibilities for leaders at all levels so as to galvanise an African-led response to the pandemic” (ECA,2000(g)).

2.9.2 The Africa Knowledge Networks Forum (AKNF)

Another initiative of the ECA that involves civil society and the private sector is the Africa Knowledge Networks Forum (AKNF) (ECA,2000(i)). What is most notable about the

AKNF is that it aims to deal with an area that has 'traditionally' been viewed as being the domain of states, namely public policy. As can be seen from the theme of its scheduled workshop 'Knowledge sharing and enriched research, training and policy decision-making', what the AKNF aims to do is to bring in these non-state actors to assist in improving and solving public policy problems that challenge the member States. The types of issues that it hopes to address include those relating to gender and governance and Africa in the Global Economy.

Through this knowledge-sharing between partners, the ECA hopes that the types of policies which its member States design and implement will be reflective of the knowledge, concerns and inputs of its partners, thus leading to more effective public policy in Africa.

2.10 Conclusion

Since 1996, the idea of partnerships has been put as the basis for reform in the structure of the ECA which is meant to enable the execution of such partnerships in the programme of the ECA. It is clear that the ECA is embracing the new development paradigm which encourages the forging of partnerships between the state, private sector and civil society. While the initial partners that were identified by the ECA did not include the private sector, today it counts both the private sector and civil society as its partners. What is also notable is that other states and non-state actors outside of the African region are identified as partners. Perhaps the ECA realises the limitations of the states, private sector and civil society within Africa and thus looks outside its region. Nevertheless, this does not mean a move away from the responsibility to make such partnerships work on the part of these African actors.

In so doing, the ECA has bound both itself and its member States to promote this approach to development. This means that if the ECA hopes to have any success in rallying support for private sector and civil society partners within South Africa, as in any other member State, it has to start by strengthening its ties and communication with the state, which has

historically been the active player in the ECA. In South Africa, the failure of the Department of Foreign Affairs to convince other departments of the importance of the ECA in African development, coupled with the ineffective communication between the Southern Africa Sub-Regional Development Centre has meant that the ECA remains largely unknown even at the state level. Since states continue to play an important role in mobilising and engaging civil society and the private sector within their borders, it is crucial that the significance and acceptance of the ECA as an important player in Africa's development be well-entrenched at the state level in order for it to permeate to the private sector and civil society.

CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING THE TRIPARTITE ALLIANCE: STATE, PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY CO-OPERATION AND THE NEW DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM.

Introduction

3.1 Establishing the need for partnerships

As globalisation tightens its grip and influence over political, economic and social issues in every part of the world, the question as to how much longer governments, whether independently or collectively as intergovernmental organisations, will manage to attempt to tackle issues of development on their own is increasingly becoming a topic of discussion. As multinational companies increasingly report turnovers that exceed the gross domestic product of many developing nations, questions keep arising as to whether or not states should continue to bear the responsibility of providing for their citizens alone. While it is still the role of governments to take care of the well-being of their citizens, it can be argued that the changing international system has reduced the power of states to provide for their citizens today what they might have been able to even as recently as twenty years ago (Robinson, 1999). Partnerships are thus being seen as ways of assisting states, particularly in the developing world, to deal with the challenges that they are faced with in their resource constraints.

While some scholars, groups and individuals, particularly in the developing world may prefer to further prolong the debate and seek alternatives to the rapid expansion in the economic power (and arguably albeit political influence) of global business, others may prefer to view the priority as not that of trying to stop multinationals and global business from expanding, but rather to find an effective way to engage them so that their benefits

do not culminate into selfish profit-making and exploitation but rather they become an effective tool towards development.

This is evident in the words of certain individuals like the Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, when he asserts that “[t]he benefits of globalization are plain to see: faster economic growth, higher living standards, accelerated innovation and diffusion of technology and management skills, new economic opportunities for individuals and countries alike.” (Annan, 2000:9). Likewise, the well-known South African businessman, Nthato Motlana captures it in a quote borrowed from Abraham Lincoln when he asserts that “[w]e cannot help small men by tearing down rich men” (Motlana, 1993:205). In further qualifying his support for globalisation, Annan continues to give a clear message that “...globalization must mean more than creating bigger markets. The economic sphere cannot be separated from the more complex fabric of social and political life, and sent shooting off on its own trajectory” (Annan, 2000: 10).

It is assertions like these which are increasingly finding themselves on centre stage in the debates that relate to the way forward in development. Perhaps it would be more correct to state that it is the World Bank that initially came out in the most forthright manner to propose an ‘extension’ of responsibility for development from being simply that of states to the involvement of other actors in the global scene. Even most recently in the World Development Report of 1999/2000, the World Bank continues to echo this tone by stating that partnerships among different levels of government, the private sector, donor groups and civil society are essential requirements for effective development (World Bank (a),1999).

Further evidence of a promotion of this ‘tripartite’ approach to development is the address by the president of the World Bank to the Bank’s Board of Governors when he poses the questions which he acknowledges are being discussed at the Bank, “What if it were possible for governments to join together with civil society, with the private sector, to decide on long-term national priorities? What if it were possible for donors to then come

in and co-ordinate their support, with countries in the driver's seat, with local ownership and local participation? What if it were possible for these strategies to look five, ten, twenty years ahead so that development could really take root and grow and could be monitored on an ongoing basis?" (Wolfensohn, 1998). All these questions asked by Wolfensohn are but an indication of the efforts to co-ordinate development in such a way that it includes more actors than simply the state.

In one of his most recent publications, Annan acknowledges the inextricable link between development and good governance and it is precisely at this point that he quickly notes that "better governance means greater participation, coupled with accountability...Depending on the issues at hand, this may include civil society organizations, the private sector, parliamentarians, local authorities, scientific associations, educational institutions and many others" (Annan, 2000: 13). This points to the embracing of private sector, state and civil society partnerships as part of the United Nations new development framework

It is thus clear that the principle of viewing co-operation between the state, the private sector and civil society as an important vehicle towards development has been taken into the 21st century and it seems highly likely that if it is to see any success in its acceptance, it will be in the early years of the new century. If, for no other reason, this '21st century approach' to development gains momentum it could very well be because it is a call that is being sounded by the world's most influential multilateral, intergovernmental institutions, like the World Bank and the United Nations. While the term 'tripartite alliance' is being in this research, it must be noted that this state-private sector-civil society partnership has a number, one of the commonly used terms being 'global governance' (Grunberg, 2000: 32) as used by the United Nations while the World Bank refers to it as the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) (World Bank b, 2000).

In its explanation of the CDF, the World Bank explicitly states that the framework is founded on the recognition of the importance of macroeconomic fundamentals with an

equal emphasis being placed on the institutional, structural and social underpinnings of a robust market economy (World Bank, 1999). Thus, it is clear that the partnerships between governments, civil society and the private sector should be pursued within the parameters of this establishment.

It is precisely this persistent perpetuation of the parameters of a robust global market economy, that causes suspicion on the implications of this partnership approach on the role and future of the state. Annan makes it clear, however, that the term 'governance' should not conjure up an image of a 'world government' with a centralised bureaucracy that tramples on the right of people and states (Annan, 2000:12). While the purpose of this research is not to test the motives of the World Bank and the United Nations in proposing this tripartite alliance, the historical view and suspicion of the World Bank from the South cannot be undermined as a possible reason why the debate about the implications of such a partnership for society in the developing world is rigorous.

3.2 Developing structures for partnerships

While the idea of partnerships seems to be gaining ground, there are views which acknowledge the growth of non-state actors and the need to integrate them in international affairs, but prefer not to integrate them in the United Nations system. One such example can be found in an article which was written by Louk Box, in which he suggests that there should be a "confederacy of confederations" (Box, 1999:33).

What Box suggests is that the United Nations is faced with a plethora of NGO's and it is battling to find an effective way of dealing with them. He criticises the current practice of the United Nations whereby certain non-state interest groups are represented within the United Nations structures. Box proposes that the United Nations should continue to be a group of States and it should continue to interact with non-State actors. However, this interaction should take place, not with some of the non-state actors within the United Nations but rather these non-state actors should form their own global confederacies

which are legitimised by autonomous national membership. Therefore, with autonomous civil society bodies and autonomous states, both can build confederations at a global level leading to structured interaction between a confederation of civil society organisations and a confederation of states-a confederacy of confederations.

Whatever form or structure the United Nations decides to adopt for the practical implementation of partnerships, whether it be at a multilateral level or within its individual Member States, it is evident that the concept of partnerships will continue to be explored further as the United Nations seeks to find ways of co-ordinating the interaction and co-operation between state and non-state actors. As an indication of a commitment to explore this concept of co-operation, the Commission on Global Governance was set up by the United Nations. While in this report, the co-operation between the state, civil society and the private sector is referred to as a 'partnership', interaction between the state, civil society and the private sector has also fallen within the realm of 'global governance'.

3.3 Evaluating 'global governance' in theory

As noted by the Commission on Global Governance (1995:4), there is no single model of what global governance should look like to date. The Commission refers to global governance as "the sum of the many ways that individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs...this relatively new concept has thus far characterised a broad and complex decision-making process which is constantly evolving and responding to changing circumstances" (Commission on Global Governance, 1995:2). The assumption here is that states, civil society and the private sector are being compelled to find ways of managing certain affairs in which each sector has an interest collectively. This would then mean that co-operation between the three sectors will be beneficial to all three and not just one. Groom and Powell therefore describe global governance as concerning "the identification and management of those issues which necessarily have an impact on all parts of the globe" (Schechter,1999:14). Among the issues identified are

development, epidemics, ecology and human rights. The areas that are of global interest are numerous and for this reason, the report of the Commission proposes a number of actions that involve reaching out to elements of civil society and co-operation between state and non-state actors to find ways of collectively directing resources towards global development.

However, there have been some critics to this idea of global governance. One such critic is Michael G. Schechter, who refers to the theory of global governance, if it is to be in the form suggested by the Commission on Global Governance as 'problem-solving theory'. By this he explains that "...it takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organised, as the given framework for action" (Schechter,1999:239). Schechter identifies problems with the ideas put forward in the Report of the Commission, which has been widely publicised and read around the world. An example of such ideas is the proposal that there be a global taxation system. The gist of Schechter's criticism is that in order for global governance to be effective, there needs to be a questioning of the current world order. He argues that the idea of global governance as carried in the Report is more reformist than transformative in its agenda, with the conclusion that it is conservative and only aims to smooth out those issues in the current world order that are impeding the smooth functioning of such an order (Schechter,1999:241). The argument put forward by Schechter can thus be understood to suggest that in order for global governance to be effective, there needs to be a change in the structure of the international system as it favours certain actors above others.

Nevertheless, if one considers the move towards partnerships which is being proposed by the United Nations as indicated in the earlier-mentioned words of Annan (Annan,2000:10) that "the benefits of globalisation are plain to see...the economic sphere cannot be separated from the more complex fabric of social and political life, and sent off shooting off on its own trajectory", it would seem that the United Nations is also taking the world as it is and seeking to find ways of making partnerships work to balance out whatever

imbalances there might be in development and the standards of living of people across the world. The purpose of this research is neither to prescribe the form that global governance should take nor to pass judgement on whether or not it is 'correct'. Rather, it attempts to develop an understanding on this concept, whether it be referred to as 'partnerships' or 'a tripartite alliance' or 'global governance', a concept which is seemingly gaining more attention and momentum in international development, and the different issues surrounding it. With this in mind, it is useful to take note of the different arguments in support and in opposition to the engagement of states with other non-state actors.

3.4 Evaluating State-Civil Society co-operation.

While much has been written and said about the activities of non-state actors that operate across borders, there is neither agreement on what exactly these non-state actors signify nor how they should be classified (O'Brien, et.al, 2000: 12). In an attempt to describe this transnational activity, a number of terms have been coined, included in which is the term 'civil society' (O'Brien et al.), 2000: 12). The term 'civil society' has often commonly been synonymously used with the term 'non-governmental organisations (NGO's)'.

Stewart (1997:4) notes that the distinguishing feature of civil society is that its activities are organised and they are taken in collective form, thus civil society symbolises "groups arranged in social networks of a reasonable fixed and routinised character". While the term civil society has become increasingly used interchangeably or even synonymously with the term non-governmental organisations (NGO's) (Weiss and Gordenker (eds.),1996:18), it should be noted that not all of civil society forms non-governmental organisations, while NGO's are part of civil society (Stewart,1997:4).

Global civil society includes a wide array of actors who operate across national boundaries, with specific objectives. This can include for example, international NGO's like the Red Cross; voluntary rule-making bodies like the International Standards Organisation; groups of professionals like the International Council of Scientific Unions and many other such organised international organisations (Commission of Global

Governance:1995:8). NGO's have increasingly received attention due to their growing activities and budgets, particularly in the activities of developing countries.

It will be useful to examine the different motivations for civil society involvement in development.

The motivations for the need to recognise and integrate civil society in development range from using civil society as a measure to hold states to account, to suggestions that states and civil society can compliment each other. The argument for the former is evident when the governments are viewed to be abdicating their traditional responsibilities as social leaders. This then leads non-governmental groups to "bypass the centre, inform themselves of the issues and appeal directly to the grassroots", thus these non-governmental actors are seen as society's "new moral and social watchdogs" (Stewart,1997:1). It is particularly this kind of view of the role of civil society that has led to much suspicion and lack of will from many governments to work with civil society and *vice versa*, to some sectors of civil society to view themselves as the more effective and efficient alternative to the state..

What this view proposes is that the more civil society is strengthened, the weaker the states; the stronger the civil society, the more accountable the government services and finally the more conscious civil society is of its intervention, the more it will shape internal processes (Stewart,1997:6). However, Stewart sharply criticises this logic, particularly because it dichotomises the state and civil society. Stewart's conceptualisation of the role of civil society is thus more in synch with the second motivation for civil society activity, namely that civil society and the state should complement each other. Stewart gives a number of reasons for his objections. In his view, this dichotomy between the state and civil society assumes the fact that the state is always the villain and in sodoing this view overlooks the role of the market. Furthermore, it fails to recognise that strengthening civil society is about strengthening, not weakening the state due to the common tie of the rule of law between them.

It must also be remembered that not all of civil society is necessarily positive, what Annan refers to as 'uncivil' society. He notes that in the same way that global forces have made possible the creation of a global civil society, they can also culminate in the facilitation of transnationalised crime, included in which is the international drug syndicate and international money-laundering (Annan,1998:57). Those that are suspicious of the agenda's of NGO's are also quick to view them as having the tendency to be self-serving at times and are also suspicious of the fact that less than 15% of those registered with the United Nations come from developing countries (Commission on Global Governance: 1995: 8) There is further suspicion of these structures given that many of the NGO's are funded by Western states and thus their agenda is often questioned when they operate in developing countries, with some viewing it as the pursuit of the agenda's of the states that fund them (Powell and Seddon,1997: 1).

There are, however those who consider the merits of global civil society to outweigh its potentially negative characteristics. The merits of many of these structures include flexibility, responsiveness and enthusiasm. (Commission on Global Governance:1995:37). The record of activities of these structures in human rights activism; humanitarian emergencies; environmental awareness and protection; HIV/AIDS activism (Weiss and Gordenker,1996:5); lobbying for debt relief of developing countries (Keronga, 2000); the creation of international standards of education and many other areas of development activity have been drawn on as positive influences that can be incorporated in the future development agenda of co-operation. Annan notes that the signing of the agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines and the signing of the Statute of the International Criminal Court marked significant new turns in co-operation. He refers to these events as indications of "global people power" whereby individuals and groups with humanitarian and human rights concerns came together through the support of public opinion and communication through the Internet to significantly influence international changes (Annan,1998:5).

It is also a fact that these structures seem to be trusted more by Western governments when it comes to aid, as is evident in Al Gore's announcement at the Copenhagen 1994 summit that almost half of the aid from USAID would be distributed through private organisations rather than the governments of developing states (Stewart, 1997:1)

While this may be seen as a possible point of dichotomising developing nations and the global civil society active within them, the creation of partnerships and strengthening of co-operation between the two can prove to be far more productive since each has to create an environment for the other to operate. As mentioned earlier, developing countries are increasingly finding themselves with limited resources and increasing needs. With their decrease in social spending and general budgetary constraints, the organisation and financial strengths of global civil society can be used to complement states in the various areas that constitute development. While there has yet to be a 'structured' form for such integration, this partnership requires ongoing experimentation. Likewise, the partnership with the private sector, or global business needs to be explored.

3.5 Evaluating State-Private Sector Co-operation

It must be borne in mind that the foundations of the United Nations were characterised by the interactions between the governments of different states. The formation of the United Nations, its structure and its activities have had to adapt and take on the shape of the international context of each era in which it operates. As Archer notes "the successes or failures of international organisations stem not so much from their formal-legal covenants as from changing configurations and distributions of power, systemic issues and forces, and the attitudes and resources of member states" (Archer, 1992:27). It is precisely this distribution of power within the UN system that has come under contention.

Given the rise in the power and influence of corporations which has been brought about by globalisation, it would seem that the United Nations views its future success in trying to improve the lives of the poor by working closely with the rich. The current vision for

partnerships with business, on which the Global Compact is based, echoes a tone of reciprocal benefits for both the United Nations and the private sector. This is clear in Annan's own words when he asserts that "...business is increasingly coming to appreciate that the work of the United Nations on behalf of peace, human rights and development helps lay the stable foundations that the expansion of its own opportunities requires. In turn, the United Nations appreciates that business has the capital, technology and expertise necessary to fuel economic growth, and that its attitude and readiness to co-operate can critically affect the prospects of a wide variety of other objectives." (Annan, 1998:4)

What Annan's vision attempts to do is to mould a friendlier face of the seemingly inevitable reality of globalisation, a reality which he strongly suggests should not simply mean the rapid expansion of markets and cannot be "separated from the more complex fabric of social and political life, and sent shooting off on its own trajectory." (Annan, 2000:10). It is from this view that Annan has developed the nine principles that form the core of the Global Compact, the purpose of which is to lay a foundation for business to take its first steps towards solidifying its relationship with the United Nations. These principles cover the topics of human rights, labour and environment (www.unglobalcompact.com, 2000), issues which are particularly pertinent to Africa's efforts to tread closer to development.

As the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson notes, "[g]overnments do, of course, still possess wide powers over-and primary responsibility for-the well-being of their citizens. But their role is not as strong as it was half a century, or even 20 years, ago...globalization has shifted many of the vital decisions that affect peoples' lives from the Cabinet room to the boardroom" (Robinson, 1999).

It follows on that since the ECA is a regional body/representative of the United Nations, it has to take some kind of position on these principles and see how they can be adapted to Africa. In an ECA publication entitled 'Accelerating A Continent's Development', the ECA's executive Secretary, K.Y. Amoako makes some appeals for solidarity with the

ECA that fall along the lines of Annan's principles. The first appeal which seems to be in line with Annan's principles on human rights calls on the ECA's partners to support conflict prevention and peace processes, by fostering ethical conduct by all sectors. Another one of Amoako's appeals deals with the need for partners to reinforce "home-grown policies and Africa-led initiatives" with the hope that this will culminate into a process of consensus-building around shared goals and priorities (ECA, 1999:83). Once again, this appeal seems to be in line with Annan's principles, particularly those of labour which include the recognition of collective bargaining as a right.

These principles and appeals are but a few of the ways in which the United Nations and its regional body, the ECA, wish to engage the private sector in development. As to how these principles can be put into practice will, like in any effective partnership, require the input of both partners (this is where the respondents to this research come in-their vision, sharing some ideas). This is uttered in the statement in the UN's Global Compact website which explains that there is no single way of putting the principles to practice "...How a company decides which approach to take depends on the business sector in which the company is located, its management structure, its output, its stakeholders, etc." (www.unglobalcompact.com, 2000). Whereas the vision of the UN and the ECA has been made known, that of one of the important players in the African economy, the South African private sector, has yet to be established. In the same way that Annan suggests that the approach selected by business will vary according to its area of practice, the approach selected by South African business will depend on how it views its role within Africa.

In her attempt to state the case for business involvement in international human rights issues, Mary Robinson aptly states that "globalisation has shifted many of the vital decisions that affect people's lives from the Cabinet to the boardroom" (Robinson, 1999:2). It is as a result of this realisation that the argument for engaging the private sector is made. As is the case with engaging civil society, there is still no clear model of what exactly private sector integration should look like. The most comprehensive 'model' that has been proposed thus far is that which was presented by Kofi Annan in Davos in 1999, known as the 'Global Compact'.

This model marks the initial key areas in which business co-operation is envisaged. Annan identifies nine areas of co-operation which are divided into three categories, namely human rights, labour standards and environmental practices (Corporate Watch,1999:1)

Annan focuses on these three areas because he believes it is these areas in which business has the most influence. In addition to this, the universal values which are expressed within these three areas already have the foundation of being backed by international agreements, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Labour Organisation's Declaration on fundamental principles and rights to work, and the Rio Declaration of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Corporate Watch,1999a). While these agreements were signed between states, the challenge of future partnerships is for business to also adopt them as part of their responsibility as 'global citizens'. This would then mean that as businesses go about their operations in different countries, at the core of their behaviour should be the respect and upholding of these fundamentals. An example of this would be the call on diamond companies not to buy diamonds from conflict areas as part of being responsible citizens who aspire towards a peaceful world, regardless of the profits that they could have made from their 'immoral' dealings.

Another example of private sector co-operation which Annan cites is the \$1 billion 'gift' to the United Nations from Ted Turner of Time Warner Inc., which has enabled the United Nations to fund different projects in developing countries. He refers to this act as an indication of global citizenship and responsibility (Annan,1998:5). In particular, he notes that business has the capital, technology and expertise which all countries need to spur economic growth (Annan,1998:4). Other areas in which the private sector can be used are technology development, skills development and other such related areas in which global business has managed to excel and develop rapidly. Thus, it is envisaged that these strengths of business can be shared to contribute towards development (Annan, 1998:4).

While these efforts to integrate global business may seem noble, there are still many who approach this co-operation with suspicion. Previous experiences of companies that have operated in environments that are notorious for human rights violation or companies who themselves have been charged with human rights violations find themselves under the scrutiny of such organisations. Not only does suspicion come from states themselves, but also from some sectors of civil society. A civil society group like Corporate Watch has at times referred to the United Nations' relationship with global corporations as a 'perilous relationship'. This group monitors the activities of global corporations and uses the web to communicate its message. In March 1999, it released a report on how the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) solicited some funds from global corporations with tarnished human rights records to fund its projects (Corporate Watch, 1999b: 1).

This example of the partners monitoring each other's behaviour can, on the other hand, be viewed as doing precisely what the partnership proposes, namely that partners take the responsibility towards development (both in direct economic terms and other development-related areas such as human rights) as being a common responsibility and being active in ensuring that development is respected both by themselves and by the other partners in the tripartite alliance.

As it seems to date, the idea of partnership and co-operation between states still relies heavily on moral judgement. While states and multilateral institutions explore this concept deeper and attempt to devise comprehensive models for co-operation, the tripartite alliance is still relying on 'good faith' that the partners' sense of responsibility will be grounded in an increasing sense of global citizenship. However, for as long as each partner is suspicious of the intentions of the other, as mentioned above, and for as long as states continue to be central players on the international stage, it is evident that each developing country will have to "own" its partnership by acting as the "legitimate organiser for co-operation efforts, through relationships and mechanisms that reflect the particular local circumstances" (World Bank, 2000).

3.6 South African examples of large-scale partnerships

The move towards co-operation between the state and non-state actors in South Africa is increasingly becoming a popular concept. Not only is the support for such initiatives being evident at policy level, but is also becoming widely spoken of in the media. Examples of this are the call by South Africa's recipient of the Boss of the Year '2000' Award, Joe Tsotetsi during an interview on a popular national radio talk show, on the private sector to explore ways of contributing to development (Tim Modise Show, 2000), while national television talk shows have also been used as platforms to call for civil society and private sector participation in development projects (Two Way, 2000). In addition to such publicity and coverage that state and non-state co-operation has received, there are also practical examples of initiatives and projects that have been undertaken by state and non-state actors in South Africa.

3.6.1 Spatial Development Initiatives (SDI's) and the Role of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

SDI's have been born out of a recognition by the South African government that the private sector has a role to play in stimulating employment through new investment. As a result, in 1995 it made a conscious decision to conceive of a programme that would identify the areas of the country that have the greatest potential for growth and then improving the functioning of government in those areas (Jourdan, 2000:717). In 1996, a workshop on Provincial Growth and Development Strategies gave birth to the idea of Development Corridors (Platzky, 2000:7). The purpose of focusing and channelling resources to such areas would be the creation of a conducive environment for investors, which would ultimately stimulate domestic and international investment (Jourdan, 2000:717). Four main objectives have been laid out for SDI's, namely export orientation and earning foreign exchange; sustainable job creation; better utilisation of existing infrastructure and resources; and finally broadening the ownership base of the economy to small and medium entrepreneurs, farmers and fisher folk.

The acronym 'PPP's' (Public-Private Partnerships) has become commonly used to refer to SDI's since partnerships between the state and private sector are "the cornerstone of the SDI strategy" (Platzky,2000:12). As noted by Taylor (2000:6), there is no single form that PPP's can take, hence the varieties of partnerships from the commercialisation of existing state activity to outright privatisation. In the case of SDI's, partnership between the state and the private sector works in such a way that the state first of all shows its full support and commitment to the project/s and so the projects are spearheaded by a state department, namely the Department of Trade and Industry. Secondly, it works to create an enabling environment for private sector investment by removing 'bottlenecks' to development. This means that the government works to remove constraints to investment, usually in the form of infrastructural deficiencies. Local, provincial and national government then work together and work closely with those departments that are responsible for implementation (Jourdan,2000:718).

The private sector also has a role to play in the programme. Taylor(2000:6) explains that a definition of the 'private sector' can be understood to include "any non-state actors. Thus private enterprise, informal market actors, community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, universities and private individuals may all be included..." This is evident in the fact that the contracts which are drawn up for SDI's are deliberately meant to include disadvantaged communities, small and medium businesses and the preservation of the natural environment, all of which are represented by different non-state interest groups. SDI's have relied heavily on funding from the private sector. In the case of the Maputo Development Corridor, for example, the \$180 million project was financed by a private consortium, with the hope that it would encourage further private investment in the region while creating at least 2000 jobs through economic growth (Taylor,2000:11). SDI's and their promotion of public-private partnerships are can thus be seen as one way in which South Africa hopes to address socio-economic concerns through market-related partnerships between the state and non-state actors.

3.6.2 The Business Trust

The Business Trust was conceived in 1998 at a business seminar attended by more than 500 South African businessmen. The idea behind it is that South African business at all levels, from the top listed companies to small businesses such as filling stations voluntarily make contributions relative to their abilities (at least 0,15% of total market capitalisation for listed companies and at least 2% of after-tax earnings for an unlisted company) (www.ananzi.co.za,2000). The Trust can be seen to have two broad objectives, one symbolic and the other practical. The symbolism of the Trust is that it is an effort by the South African business community to demonstrate its commitment to contributing towards development in South Africa. One of the chairmen of the Trust, Dave Brink, is quoted as saying “[i]nternational experience showed that countries that do well have an effective working relationship between business and government”. On the practical side, the trust is intended to assist in contributing to the development of tourism and education, with the ultimate aim of creating jobs. The money that is accumulated through the trust is to be used in projects and programmes that are aimed at this type of development.

3.7 Conclusion

Development is becoming less the sole responsibility of the state. While states are still expected not to abdicate their primary responsibility of improving and protecting the lives of their citizens, there is a growing movement towards propagating a collective effort from non-state actors in whose interests it is to promote development. The ECA has taken the lead from its mother-body, the United Nations, in embracing partnerships as a way forward for development in Africa. While there is no international standard or model of the form that these partnerships should take on, it is a relevant attempt to investigate what ideas exist within the different state and non-state actors within the Member States of the ECA. With this in mind, South Africa, as an example of a Member State that is already experimenting with a number of co-operation efforts between state and non-state actors could prove to be a helpful starting point for the ECA.

CHAPTER 4

THE SOUTH AFRICAN RESPONSE

Introduction

This chapter will be based on the six interviews that have been conducted with senior representatives from the state, private sector and civil society in South Africa. To begin with, the questions which were sent to the respondents and upon which the interview was based will be presented, followed by a report of the response from each individual respondent. In conclusion, the main and common points that were raised in each sector will be drawn upon, with the final analysis thereof being done in chapter five.

4.1. The Questions

The interviews are based on the following questions:

1. Do you see any prospects for partnerships between civil society / the private sector and the state?
2. Which aspects of this partnership do you think still require clarity?
3. Are you aware of the United Nations' agenda of establishing partnerships between states, civil society and the private sector in development?
4. Do you think that co-operation should be a bilateral relationship between the state and civil society or the state and private sector, or should there be an integrated approach of cross-co-operation between all three levels?

5. Are you aware of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (hereinafter referred to as the ECA) and its work?
6. If so, do you see a role for the private sector in the work of the ECA? If not, what role would you envisage for the private sector / civil society in the development of Africa?

It must be noted that for question 1 and 6, respondents from civil society and the private sector were asked specifically about their sector, while respondents from the state were asked about all sectors. This is due to the fact that, as discussed in earlier chapters, the ECA is a state-based organisation and therefore a view from the 'traditional' actor about how it views the inclusion of both non-traditional actors is required.

4.2 THE STATE RESPONSE

4.2.1 Dr. Rob Davies¹

- *Do you see any prospects for partnerships between civil society, the private sector and states in development?*

In response to this question, Dr. Davies focuses more on the role of the private sector in partnerships. He first draws attention to the fact that the state is often required to play a leading role. In particular, the state is expected to provide the economic infrastructure, but it lacks the resources to set about living up to its expectations. This is where partnerships can play an important role. He notes that it is, however, important to distinguish between different types of partnerships. Dr. Davies draws a distinction between partnerships that are aimed at the delivery of municipal services and those that are intended for the provision of an economic infrastructure. The provision of municipal services should remain the responsibility of the state, while the development of an economic infrastructure creates opportunities for the involvement of the private sector through strategic initiative programmes.

While acknowledging that there are prospects for the involvement of the private sector, Dr. Davies emphasises the importance of drawing up clear contracts. The purpose of these contracts would be to first identify precisely what function the private sector will be performing and to clarify why the state cannot provide it. In addition to this, performance criteria for the private sector should be clearly detailed in such contracts. In substantiation of this point, Dr. Davies notes that while the private sector is often commended for quality and efficiency, there are examples of instances when houses that were built by the private sector were not necessarily superior to those provided by the state. For this reason, the private sector should be bound by these contracts that are signed prior to any state-private sector partnership agreement.

With regard to the role of civil society, Davies sees prospects for civil society participation through co-operatives, community ventures and small enterprises.

- *Which aspects of this partnership do you think still require clarity?*

According to Davies, the debate regarding partnerships is usually ideological. This debate is based on the belief that the private sector is always better than government and as can be seen from the example above, this is not always the case and should thus be understood. Nevertheless, there are 2 main areas which require clarity. To begin with, the previously-mentioned distinction between the role of the state and that of the private sector should be clearly defined. In other words, there remain some functions which are clearly the responsibility of the state and those which are for the private sector. Following on to this, it must always be remembered that civil society and the private sector are non-state actors and the parameters of their involvement in development should be made clear.

- *Are you aware of the United Nations' agenda of establishing partnerships between states, civil society and the private sector?*

¹ Dr. Rob Davies is a Member of Parliament of the ruling African National Congress and heads the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry

While Davies is not aware of the United Nations' agenda, he indicates that the idea of such partnerships is currently "World Bank fashion" and perhaps this is where the United Nations is getting it from.

- *Do you think that co-operation should be a bilateral relationship between the state and civil society or the state and private sector, or should there be an integrated approach of cross-co-operation between all three levels?*

Once again, Davies draws on the importance of distinguishing between types of projects. In other words, the nature of the project will determine with which of the two sectors a partnerships should be entered into. Therefore, the types of partnerships that would be envisaged with civil society would be those that entail service delivery since both the state and civil society are not profit-driven. On the other hand, partnerships with the private sector should be those in which the state leverages in resources from the private sector in order to supplement the limited resources of the state.

- *Are you aware of the ECA and its work?*

Dr. Davies acknowledges not knowing much about the ECA and its work. What he knows about the ECA is that it seems to act as a think-tank that has attempted to provide alternatives to Structural Adjustment Programmes.

- *If so, do you see a role for the private sector and civil society in the work of the CA? If not, what role would you envisage for the private sector and civil society in the development of Africa?*

It seems to Davies as though the Washington Consensus is finding its way into the UN system. He notes that in the wake of such developments, it will be essential for Africa to mastermind its own way of approaching the issue. This would mean that where necessary, Africa should not simply accept the dictates as to how the issue of partnerships should be approached. Rather, it should find an approach that is suitable to Africa's needs and challenges, while assessing the impacts and implications of such partnerships for Africa.

4.2.2 Mr. John Barton-Bridges²

- *Do you see any prospects for partnerships between civil society, the private sector and states in development?*

Definitely, provided that it is well-regulated. In South Africa, there has been support for partnerships from municipal, provincial and national government. The current private-public partnerships (PPP's) that are being implemented in South Africa are an indicator of this support. Barton-Bridges notes that in order to engage the private sector at the municipal level, service partnerships should be viable enough to attract private sector involvement.

Consequently, he asserts that it is irrational to expect the private sector to constantly base its partnerships with the state on donations or hand-outs from the private sector to the state to provide services. The private sector cannot give charity because it is not comprised of charity organisations. There is often a perception that the profit incentive of the private sector is a bad thing and Barton-Bridges argues that it is not logical to view it this way since the private sector has to function to make a profit, that is what lies at the core of the private sector. However, while profit in itself is not bad, it is excessive profit-making that needs to be regulated against. This is where the role of regulation is crucial. There should be negotiated agreements on the provision of services between states and the private sector, culminating in benefits for both. Therefore, Barton-Bridges argues that it only makes sense for the private sector to seek profit in whatever operations it undertakes. This is where the government can then play a role in ensuring that the citizens who receive the services of the private sector are protected from any possibilities of exploitation.

² Mr. John Barton-Bridges is the Manager in charge of the Private Sector Investments Business Unit at the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).

With regard to the involvement of civil society, he identifies a choice that the government should make, namely making a decision as to whether it will directly subsidise services or whether it will use community-based organisations as channels of such service provision. Therefore, there is a strong role for community-based organisations.

- *Which aspects of this partnership do you think still require clarity?*

It is essential that an understanding of how these partnerships will work is developed. This means that each side must see benefits for itself. For example, through the establishment of partnerships, the community should look forward to the benefit of cheaper services; for the government, partnerships should mean that it does not have to rely too much on its already-strained fiscal muscle; organised labour should look forward to better conditions and an increase in employment. For example, government can award contracts to those private sector companies that can produce the best prospects for increased employment.

- *Are you aware of the United Nations' agenda of establishing partnerships between the state, civil society and the private sector in development?*

No

- *Do you think that co-operation should be a bilateral relationship between the state and civil society or the state and the private sector, or should there be an integrated approach of cross-co-operation between all three levels?*

The approach should definitely be integrated. However, it is important to distinguish between a legal *agreement* and a *relationship*. Barton-Bridges makes this distinction in order to provide an explanation as to why a bilateral agreement is not desirable. The community should not be signing any legal agreements with the state. Rather, the agreement should be signed between the private sector and the state with the community constantly being consulted and made aware of the process.

- *Are you aware of the ECA and its work?*

No

- *If not, what role would you envisage for the private sector and civil society in the development of Africa?*

There is an enormous role for the private sector and civil society in the development of Africa. To begin with, it is well-known that many African states have a backlog in infrastructure and this is where the private sector can come in as a source of capital through public-private partnerships. Secondly, governments can benefit from the skills and efficiencies of the private sector. For example, when it comes to the provision of water and sanitation, there are some private companies that have technical expertise in that field. Therefore, the government can contract these companies and their experts. In turn, this could lead to more efficient and cheaper service.

Finally, Barton-Bridges draws attention to the fact that it is important to remember that governments have historically failed to be accountable to the people. Therefore, those private companies that are contracted by the government can be held accountable for inefficiency and failure to deliver the expected services. Such expectations will be spelled out in the initial legal agreement or contract that is signed between the government and the company. What this would then mean is that instead of over-stretching their fiscal budgets by playing the role of providing services and infrastructure that have thus far proven costly, governments can rather play the role of ensuring that the private sector is accountable by following up on the complaints of the community.

4.3 THE PRIVATE SECTOR RESPONSE

4.3.1 Mr. Clem Sunter³

- *Do you see any prospects for partnerships between the private sector and states in development?*

For a start, Sunter notes that the development of SMART partnerships has been seen as one of the ways in which private sector-state co-operation can be conducted. This, he notes, was developed in the 1980's in Malaysia, and has been viewed by some as a possible way in which partnerships can be adopted in Southern Africa. In response to the questions and as a way of bringing across his idea of the prospects for partnerships, Mr. Sunter refers extensively to his book *Never Mind the Millennium, What About the Next 24 hours* (Sunter, 1999). He particularly refers to the analogy of foxes and hedgehogs. In relating the analogy to the study at hand, the foxes can be seen to represent the entrepreneurs, small to medium-size businessmen with innovative ideas and civil society organisations. On the other hand, the hedgehogs represent the well-established, bureaucratic big business and governments.. Therefore, the first point that Mr. Sunter notes is the importance of the state's role in assisting the 'foxes'.

The importance of such support is based on the understanding that there is a crucial need for the development of more entrepreneurs and small businesses in South Africa and Sunter believes that this is the role of the state. In reference to his book, Sunter notes that California is the sixth richest 'country' in the world after the United States, Japan, Germany, France and Britain because it has the highest intensity of foxes in the world. Thus, Sunter sees partnerships as being essentially between the state and small to medium businesses. Having noted this, the first part of this partnership begins with the state providing the necessary infrastructure such as roads, electricity and water.

The second way in which the state can assist is by ensuring that there is necessary capital distribution to reach the small businesses. This problem arises from the failure of the banks to lend the necessary financial support to small businesses. Therefore, the state needs to strike a deal between itself and the banks on behalf of the small businesses, for

example by taking out guarantees on behalf of small businesses. Sunter notes that the Khula Trust is an example of such an effort, even though the lack of enthusiasm on behalf of the banks has hampered the se efforts. Nevertheless, there needs to be a partnership between the state and small business in dealing with financial institutions.

Another role that the state can play in these partnerships is through education. Since the provision of education is the duty of the state, states should make entrepreneurial education part of the curriculum in public schools. In addition to the education, states should demonstrate their commitment to entrepreneurship by giving tax incentives for the development of small businesses. One such way is to reduce the tax that is paid by small businesses.

Yet another way in which the state and private sector can work with each other is through the maintenance of law and order. If there is no stable and safe environment for business to thrive in, then business cannot function effectively. Therefore, Sunter makes use of an example of co-operation between police and the business community of Rosebank, Johannesburg where the businesses around the area report any suspicious criminal activity to the police, who then respond swiftly. Consequently, the crime rate in the area has been brought down considerably.

- *Which aspects of this partnership do you think still require clarity?*

The main point that Sunter feels needs to be made clear is that the emphasis should be more on partnerships between the state and small business (hedgehogs and foxes), instead of partnerships between a hedgehog and another hedgehog (states and big business). This, he explains, is because big business can “take care of ourselves” while small business still needs state support in order to grow. Sunter expresses discontentment with the idea of hedgehogs engaging each other only, since he believes that hedgehogs have a way of excluding the people they are talking about. This means

³ Mr. Clem Sunter is the Chairman of the Anglo American Chairman’s Fund.

that if big business and the state are to be left to engage each other on what the best paths towards development, they will end up excluding the very same people for whom the development is intended.

- *Are you aware of the United Nations' agenda of establishing partnerships between states, civil society and the private sector in development?*

Sunter notes that it seems as though the agenda of the United Nations seems to be much in line with the types of summits that are held in Davos, where states and other non-state actors come together and make promises to improve working relationships. In his book he makes reference to “miniature hedgehogs who congregate at Davos in Switzerland once a year and call for a New World Order or advocate a Third Way” (Sunter, 1999:23).. Since these summits have focused mostly on the role of big business, Sunter suggests a few ways in which big business can contribute towards development. He further draws attention to the point that globalisation has not only brought challenges to the state, but also to large companies. Having said this, the importance of entrepreneurship is once again brought across. The role of big business here would be to support small businesses and assist in the development of small business. For example, big business can assist small business by outsourcing its non-core business to small business.

Another role that Sunter suggests could be played by big business is could be the adoption of small businesses. For example, one big company like Anglo America could adopt 10 entrepreneurs as part of a development system. Partnerships should not take the form of ‘projects’, but there has to be a system that is devised in order for the development to be sustainable. The problem with projects, he notes, is that once the money runs out, the project or programme has to be abandoned, consequently stifling development.

- *Do you think that co-operation should be a bilateral relationship between the state and civil society or the state and private sector, or should there be an integrated approach of cross-co-operation between all three levels?*

Sunter prefers co-operation between the state and non-governmental organisations since NGO's are "social foxes". In order to avoid "hedgehog think", which Sunter suggests was dominant at the Job Summit which was meant to bring about ideas on how to create jobs, the state has to work more closely with these social foxes because they comprise more of the people for whom the development is intended and therefore it would be more relevant for the state to work with them than with big business. Partnerships between the state and big business should be occasional, such as the earlier-mentioned Business Trust in which businesses (both big and small, with large sums coming from big business) voluntarily contributing R1 billion in public-private partnership for national development. Nevertheless, relationships should be multilateral in order to involve both hedgehogs and foxes.

- *Are you aware of the ECA and its work?*

No. "That's one hedgehog that has not registered on my mind"

- *If not, what role would you envisage for the private sector in the development of Africa?*

Sunter uses HIV/AIDS as an example of an area in which states and the private sector need to co-operate with each other in Africa. He suggests that the challenge of AIDS should be viewed in the same way that the threat of an enemy that is about to enter through the borders of a country and wipe out a third of that country's population should be viewed. During such time, society would be re-mobilised, tankers and fighter jets would be bought and the whole country would be ready to go into battle. Likewise, there has to be a way in which civil society and the private sector can be involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

To illustrate this further, Sunter suggests some examples of how partnerships can be used in this battle against AIDS by setting out a role for each of the partners. He starts by noting that there is an essential need for a partnership between the government and the private sector. There needs to be separate initiatives to go to schools and educate about AIDS. Sunter suggests that teachers hardly have the capacity to effectively educate and deal with the need for AIDS-related activities in schools. Therefore, this

brings about the need for separate initiatives that will culminate in the creation of special teams with professional, specialised knowledge to go to the schools and specialise in AIDS education. This is where the partnership comes to play. The private sector could provide some resources that the teams would need while the government should provide funding for these teams.

When asked as to whether he thought that the private sector should assist in donating, for example condoms and the necessary drugs for the treatment of STD, Sunter suggests that the partnership should not work in the form of a donation, but rather the nature of the partnership between the government and the private sector should be such that the government can negotiate with those companies that produce the condoms and drugs to provide such goods at a cheaper price, in return for large orders. Sunter also identifies scope for partnerships between the private sector and civil society. As an example, communities can engage in the building of orphanages with the aid that they receive from the private sector.

In conclusion, Sunter states that instead of overloading the system, government should simply make a point of getting partnerships to work for it.

4.3.2 Mr James Lennox⁴

- *Do you see any prospects for co-operation between the state and the private sector?*

Yes. Lennox believes that practically everything can be done through private-public partnerships. He notes that at the moment, SACOB feels that through infrastructural development, they could be acting as a vehicle for state initiatives. Examples of such assistance could be in export centre programmes and initiatives of the Department of Trade and Industry. Lennox suggests what he calls 'social capitalism', whereby the private sector should put its weight behind genuine social upliftment and not just exploit the partnerships for the sake of profit at the expense of development.

⁴ Mr James Lennox is the Policy Consultant: Infrastructure at the South African Chamber of Business (SACOB)

- *Which aspects of this partnership do you think still require clarity?*

Lennox observes that it seems as though the state has yet to get comfortable with the idea of the private sector delivering services. He gets the impression that states are moving towards partnerships with the private sector only as a last resort to avert financial constraints. He suggests that in a way, the involvement of the private sector can be seen as another form of tax on the private sector since they are doing what states are already being paid to do. Therefore, the purpose of this relationship seems to require clarity. As an appendix to this, Lennox suggests that states need to undergo a paradigm shift which will lead them to accept that the private sector can run some services more efficiently than the state. However, he also suggests that the paradigm shift should not be limited to states since the private sector also needs to re-visit the way it has always seen things. In this case, the private sector needs to also make itself comfortable with the idea that ultra-capitalism will not work. Therefore, there is no longer a place for what Lennox calls “ultra-capitalism” nor for “ultra-socialism” and this is the point that needs to be made very clear in order to understand what stands to be gained out of partnerships.

Lennox also notes that it has to be made clear how exactly these partnerships will benefit the taxpayer. To illustrate this point, Lennox uses the example of toll roads. In the past, toll roads were constructed and alternative routes were provided for those who did not wish to use the toll road. Lately, however, there are no more alternative routes. He therefore asks the question as to what the benefit for the taxpayer is if there is no alternative but to pay more.

- *Are you aware of the United Nations’ agenda of establishing partnerships between states, civil society and the private sector in development?*

Even though Lennox acknowledges that he is not too up-to-date with all the details of the United Nations’ agenda, he states that he is aware that there is a move towards

partnerships, especially the suggestions by the World Bank. However, he is critical of the inactiveness of states in partnerships and explains that SACOB hopes to start focusing on partnerships and being more proactive.

- *Do you think that co-operation should be a bilateral relationship between the state and civil society or the state and private sector, or should there be an integrated approach of cross-co-operation between all three levels?*

The first thing that Lennox raises in the involvement of civil society is that labour has to be involved. Even though he takes cognisance of the attempts to have such involvement through NEDLAC, he warns that the interaction between the three partners should not culminate in too much bureaucracy. For this reason, Lennox warns against the formal establishment of models or policies that dictate the interaction between the three partners since he believes that such formalisation is what leads to bureaucracy.

In addition to labour, there should be the involvement of local communities. This, Lennox suggests, would assist in avoiding too much centralisation. As an example, he speaks of the recent putting up of telephone lines by TELKOM in the town of Klerksdorp. Lennox is critical of the way in which TELKOM brought in companies from Johannesburg to do the work. Instead of doing so, TELKOM could have consulted the society and questioned them about the role that they thought they could have played in putting up these lines and how they would suggest they could have been uplifted by such a project. Instead, society was excluded and TELKOM preferred to rely on the established Johannesburg-based businesses.

- *Are you aware of the ECA and its work?*

No

- *If not, what role would you envisage for the private sector in the development of Africa?*
Business is vital. Governments have to start accepting that they are not the panacea. They have to create the environment that will allow business to contribute toward development. There is no way that governments in Africa can put anything together and

therefore business will have to be the dominant provider when it comes to infrastructure (this includes the involvement of parastatals). However, states MUST still create the environment.

Another area that will need to be improved on is that of inspiring leadership, both within the private sector and the state in Africa. Lennox asserts that there is currently too much desire for consensus with everyone being too afraid to step on someone else's toes, to the point that there is ultimately no consensus and no clear way forward either. Therefore, there is a need for leadership that will consult but also be decisive enough to move forward towards visible action.

4.4 CIVIL SOCIETY RESPONSE

4.4.1 Dr. Garth le Pere⁵

- *Do you see any prospects for partnerships between civil society and states in development?*

Le Pere first acknowledges that normatively speaking, civil society does have a role to play in development. He cites examples of successful development projects, especially rural projects, in countries like Kenya and Zimbabwe that can be attributed to the active participation of civil society. However, he strongly emphasises the point that civil society has to be organised. In other words, important and effective to the extent that civil society is organised. Weak and disorganised groups lead to poor democratisation and raise alarm for co-optation and intimidation.

Even while acknowledging the need for civil society to actively take part in development, le Pere strongly brings across the point that such participation needs to function within an environment that allows them to do such carry out their work. This is where the role of governments in creating this enabling environment becomes crucial. The effectiveness of civil society participation depends substantially on the type of environment that

⁵ Dr Garth le Pere is the Executive Director of the Institute for Global Dialogue

governments create for it. Support from the government can make a crucial difference between the success and failure of civil society initiatives.

- *Which aspects of this partnership do you think still require clarity?*

Once again, the point that le Pere emphasises is that it must be clearly understood that the role of the government in creating a fitting environment for civil society to function should not be overlooked. It must be made clear that the state still holds the power to either frustrate or encourage effective civil society participation.

- *Are you aware of the United Nations' agenda of establishing partnerships between states, civil society and the private sector in development?*

Yes. The whole idea was institutionalised at the Rio Summit, however, it died a 'natural death'. The annual NGO Summit in New York which is also held with NGOs from all over the world to look at the UN's development programme is also an example of engaging civil society as part of these partnerships. It is an attempt to engage UN management and development agencies with non-state actors.

- *Do you think that co-operation should be a bilateral relationship between the state and civil society or the state and private sector, or should there be an integrated approach of cross-co-operation between all three levels?*

Le Pere suggests that it is preferable that all three be combined. He states that even though the state, the private sector and civil society theoretically represent different interests (with private sector being driven by the need for profit and civil society by that of protecting civil interests), there are some synergies or common areas of interest that are shared by these actors. Simply put, neither of these three actors benefits from an underdeveloped society and therefore each should seek to work towards constant development. As an illustration, le Pere notes the many instances when the private sector has worked with former President Nelson Mandela to develop the health and education sector as part of their social responsibility, which in turn can provide them with the type of workforce that it needs.

However, one has to come back to the importance of having a state that facilitates development by creating an environment that makes development possible. It is here that le Pere draws on the idea of vertical and horizontal relationships. The vertical arrangement represents the role of the state in creating the enabling environment. Le Pere asserts that the primary function of the state is to create and model itself as a developmental state since the state still holds the power and institutions to create an enabling environment for development. In fact, the state can act as a catalyst towards development.

The horizontal arrangement represents the co-operation that has to take place between different civil society organisations themselves. Le Pere believes that this kind of co-operation does not receive enough attention and thus results in many actors within civil society competing with each other while they are working towards a common goal.

- *Are you aware of the ECA and its work?*

Yes. Le Pere sees the ECA as an institution that has abundant resources but functions in a vacuum. Its resources, he notes, are not properly deployed and it lacks the operational policy that can culminate such effective resource deployment. He further states that the ECA has a bureaucratic, project-driven approach to development. He does, however, commend the good studies that are produced by the staff of the ECA in areas such as trade and regional integration but it nevertheless lacks broader co-ordination with players regionally and internationally. In addition to this, le Pere considers the presence of the ECA to be unfelt in the South Africa as result of its resources not being far-reaching to all of Africa.

- *Do you see a role for civil society in the work of the ECA?*

Very much so. The ECA needs to put in place structures to facilitate the partnership between civil society and itself. This has to be done in context with the 'refurbishing of the state' in Africa, both in a substantive and a residual sense. What le Pere suggests is that the ECA should be instrumental in ensuring that these partnerships are, for example,

part of facilitating functioning institutions and a turnover in leadership. To the extent that the ECA has the power, it can use it to manage tension between development and refurbishment. He further suggests that Mbeki's idea of a renaissance, which Le Pere views as a way of encouraging a new wave for democratisation, can be made an African project in an effort to speed up democratisation efforts in Africa. This can be encouraged with practical projects. and this is where the ECA should be active.

Le Pere also adds views on the role that the ECA can play in 'creating a private sector in Africa. Le Pere considers it premature to talk of a private sector in Africa since the private sector is still in an embryonic stage in Africa. He argues that there are businesses here and there but there is not quite an organised private sector that can make its presence felt. The state in Africa is thus faced with the task of encouraging the development of a private sector. Le Pere suggests that the state needs to privatise and divest itself of assets as part of this development of the private sector. This is not to imply that there should be a total retreat of the state since the state still has to play that essential role of creating the stable environment. This is an example of the role that the ECA can be playing in communicating to the African state what needs to be done.

4.4.2 Mr Philip Dexter⁶

- *Do you see any prospects for partnerships between civil society and states in development?*

Yes. Dexter first draws attention to his conceptual understanding of the distinction between civil society, the private sector and the state. He considers this distinction to be problematic since in his view, there is the state and then there is the rest of society. In other words, the private sector, just like any other non-state actor, falls under 'society' and should not be conceptualised as being different to that society. He states that civil society would then include, for example, business and labour. Having said this, Dexter

⁶ Mr. Philip Dexter is the Executive Director of the National Economic Development and Labour Council.

goes ahead to state that he does not simply see partnerships as ‘prospects’ but rather as “essential” and “fundamental”.

- *Which aspects of this partnerships do you think still require clarity?*

Dexter notes that many people view this concept of partnerships as a liberal concept but Dexter disagrees with this interpretation. Instead, he suggests that it should be viewed as an expression of democratic responsibility. In clarifying this, there should be an understanding of what it is that works about the partnerships and what is expected to be achieved through partnerships. Therefore, it should be seen as a philosophy of good governance since it forces a certain kind of relationship that fosters sustainable, collective outcomes. It further gets rid of hierarchy by placing the different actors on an equal footing through active citizenship, where each individual participate where he/she works and lives.

- *Are you aware of the United Nations’ agenda of establishing partnerships between states, civil society and the private sector in development?*

Very much so, for example the UN Global Summit addresses this issue. Dexter notes that it is critical that such an environment is created at a multilateral level since it will gain ground within the Member States of the United Nations.

- *Do you think that co-operation should be a bilateral relationship between the state and civil society or the state and private sector, or should there be an integrated approach of cross-co-operation between all three levels?*

Even though a conceptual distinction is made in the first answer between the state and the rest of society, there is nevertheless scope for bilateral and multilateral partnerships. For example, when it comes to efforts to attract investment, there needs to be a strong partnership between the government and the private sector. On the other hand, there needs to be other partnerships that exist between the members of civil society, for example that between workers and employers in the workplace. Then there are partnerships that require everybody, the state and society (as defined by Dexter) to co-

operate with each other. One such example that Dexter gives would be the making of socio-economic choices and dealing with issues such as AIDS.

When questioned as to whom he thinks should lead in these initiatives, Dexter emphasises that central to the effectiveness of these partnerships is the need for leadership. He suggests that while states should not have to dominate partnerships, elected governments should bear the responsibility of using state institutions to mobilise for stronger and more effective partnerships. This is because in a democracy, the buck still stops with elected governments and therefore they have an important role to play.

- *Are you aware of the ECA and its work?*

Dexter has heard of the ECA but cannot clearly remember what it is all about. He may have read a book or an article on it but can't say for sure what it is meant to do.

- *If not, what role would you envisage for civil society in the development of Africa?*

Dexter asserts that the problem is that there is currently no consensus in Africa with regard to a strategy for development. There is no agreement as to what would be the best way to go about addressing issues of poverty, ignorance and disease. Simply put African countries are stuck between one of two approaches to development. One is what Dexter calls "crude and fundamentalist" IMF strategies and the other is the what he refers to as the approach that is preferred by trade unions. African states thus find themselves jockeying between these two positions.

This is where Dexter finds the idea of an African Renaissance, as perpetuated by Thabo Mbeki, to be relevant. For him, the issue is not whether or not such a Renaissance is possible, but rather the fact that it has begun to get African talking about what African solutions are going to be adopted as the effective strategies for development. This, he suggests, has not been happening at multilateral level, including multilateral institutions like the Organisation of African Unity and the World Bank.

Therefore, if there has to be a starting point for partnerships in Africa, it will have to be through effective dialogue between state and non-state actors. These actors have to find a way of first establishing what it is exactly that is needed by Africa to deal effectively with its persistent underdevelopment. Therein, adds Dexter lies the responsibility of governments to bring the players together and to say “where do we start, let us start”.

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, a general pattern in the responses can be identified. To begin with, in their answer to question one, each respondent clearly stated that they saw prospects for partnerships between their sector and another. However, the answer to the second question generally indicated that each respondent would like a clear explanation as to what the benefits of such partnerships are, why these partnerships should be adopted and how this can be done. With regard to the awareness of the respondents of the United Nations’ agenda for partnerships, only one of the respondents was absolutely certain of what it is about. However, there is generally a better awareness of the World Bank’s ideas on partnerships, that is to say that the respondents identify the concept of partnerships more with the World Bank than with the United Nations. The general perception among the respondents is that such an approach is the one that the United Nations might be adopting.

In their response to question four, the respondents generally thought that there should be an integrated approach to partnerships, meaning that the state, private sector and civil society should be working together. However, one is once again brought back to the question of parameters the answers to the second question. The respondents generally indicate that while all three levels should co-operate with each other, the different functions that are performed by each sector will remain and therefore the nature of the co-operation should be made clear. There is no suggestion of a permanent definition of how this partnership should work or how exactly the three actors should compliment each other, but the respondents seem to consider the inclusion of other

sectors as being nonetheless vital. Only one of the six respondents had substantial knowledge of the ECA. Therefore, most of the respondents answered in general about the role of partnerships in African development.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5 Lessons from the respondents

After conducting the interviews with the South African respondents, a number of general observations can be made, based on the views and ideas that have been presented by the respondents. In line with the main purpose of this research, these observations can serve as guidelines in making recommendations on the future approach to partnerships in the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

As has been mentioned in the introductory chapters, the concept of partnerships that the ECA is currently embracing includes both the private sector and civil society. While civil society was already identified as a partner back in 1996 when the programme orientation of the ECA was adopted, the private sector seems to have been identified more recently. What makes the ECA approach somewhat interesting is that while it embraces a concept which is considered to be a product of the current neo-liberal world order, it simultaneously promises an approach that will be uniquely African and suited to the needs of the many underdeveloped nations of Africa. One could be selective in their view of how this proposal of what Amoako calls an 'Africa-led' approach will work. It could be viewed as an effort not to be seen as blind advocates of the ideologies of those international actors with more powerful voices, or alternatively as an acknowledgement that the current system can work for Africa if Africa is given the stage to cast her own play.

One of the crucial issues that the ECA will have to pay attention to if it hopes to leverage any success is the issue of its visibility. It is rather disappointing that out of six respondents, all of whom represent their sectors at a high level, only one

respondent knew the ECA well. While one cannot assume that this is the case in all the Member States of the ECA, it is nevertheless a matter that cannot be brushed aside as an issue of ignorance on the part of the respondents. The onus is also on the ECA to make itself known and its presence felt on the African continent. As one of the think-tanks on much-needed development in Africa, the ECA has to have the kind of presence that will make any of its recommendations on approaches to development carry weight by being known and recognised, at least by key role-players on the continent. The same can be said for the disappointing interaction between the ECA and South African government departments. Perhaps the first step towards the ECA being known and understood will be through intensified interaction with those sectors which it hopes to attract in its partnerships. Since the South African government is already stealing the attention of non-state actors in South Africa, the ECA would do well to utilise government departments as a vehicle to reaching the desired partners.

There seems to be a general understanding among the respondents that the state still retains the basic responsibility of being the custodian of development. Likewise, there is an understanding that the state does not have to do this alone, particularly in Africa. However, it emerges from the interviews that the respondents recognise the approach to partnerships more as a product of the World Bank than any other institution. Therefore, given the types of reactions with which the programmes of the World Bank are often met, an approach that will be satisfactory to the African actors is needed. The dilemma that is generally recognised is also the fact that while the African state needs to co-operate with non-state actors, an environment has yet to be created that will make it possible for non-state actors to even begin to mushroom. Therefore, the general concern that was raised by most of the respondents is that there is a need for a political and social consciousness of partnerships in Africa.

The strategic positioning of the ECA as both the regional arm of the ECA (thus having access to most states on the continent) and an institution served by well-trained professionals should be utilised to the fullest in promoting the type of environment that

is essential for partnerships. The challenge for the ECA is that while it should not seek to be prescriptive, it needs to clearly give an indication of what a uniquely African approach should look like, throwing suggestions in the way of its Member States that will at least form the basis for debate. In so doing, the ECA will be facilitating what Dexter suggests should be a 'consensus' on what Africa's development strategy will be.

In addition to the establishment of a viable environment for partnerships, the respondents have identified the need for a clear understanding as to why these partnerships are necessary. Emphasis has been placed on the need for each side to be able to see tangible benefits for itself. This is significant in that even though all respondents are conscious of the level of development in Africa, none of the respondents have based their support for partnerships purely on a moral argument. None of the respondents has sounded a call for a complete change of the global order before partnerships are implemented. Instead, the respondents have all demonstrated an attempt at making partnerships work to circumvent the stumbling blocks of the current order while operating within such an order.

Overall, the respondents support the idea of cross-co-operation between the three sectors, though the approach to such co-operation may be different. While none of the respondents offered a 'model' for co-operation, suggestions generally indicate that attention needs to be paid to the legal aspects of partnerships, particularly where development projects are involved. This is particularly the case with partnerships between the state and the private sector. The most commonly identified area of partnership between these two sectors has been in the development of infrastructure and in some cases the provision of services. Since this seems to be one of the key challenges for many African countries, one would recommend that the ECA look into putting its weight behind a large-scale programme of promoting private sector-state partnerships for infrastructure development. This recommendation is made because such a partnership is arguably one in which the benefits to each of the partners is most

clearly visible. By starting with the most visibly beneficial partnerships, the ECA could be laying some solid ground for the support of future partnerships that might not have immediately tangible benefits, such as the private sector contributing towards education.

Another idea which often receives little attention, as noted by le Pere is that of co-operation between organised sectors of civil society. This is particularly important in Africa where many governments have suppressed the activities of civil society and yet civil society has accounted for a number of development initiatives on the continent. The ECA can assist in the co-ordination of civil society co-operation while also bringing its Members on board to embrace civil society as a partner instead of an adversary.

Like any organisation, the ECA does face limitations to its resources. However, those resources that are available to it need to be utilised to make a stronger statement on the African continent. Given its benefit of historical ties to other African institutions and access to other international institutions, the ECA will do well to lead the way in innovating a practical model that will give a deeper, tangible meaning to an African approach to state, private sector and civil society partnerships.

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